

INSPIRED WORD

April 13, 2016

PRAYER

Lord, we come together tonight and You know the things that are on our hearts. Last week You told us to 'let it go', but in our human weakness, sometimes that is very difficult for us. I know that is why You keep reminding us over and over again. So, Lord, we place all of our burdens at Your feet and we ask You to take them from us. Don't let us take back any of those burdens at all when we leave here tonight, Lord, because we know in our hearts that You can take care of each and every them. We thank You, Lord!

PRAYER

I heard a short prayer this week and I just love it. It goes like this: "**Come, Holy Spirit, come now, come as You wish!**" That's it – that is the prayer. That is what we can say here tonight: "Come now, come as You wish, Holy Spirit; come into this community!"

SHARING / EXHORTATION

We are very fortunate here; we are more fortunate than we realize on a day to day basis. March 30, 1986 was Easter, and the following month this prayer community was born – in April 1986. We went through a Sealed in the Spirit seminar. So a few days from today, we are ending the 29th year of this prayer community. What the Lord placed on my mind is that the seminar wasn't called the **Life** in the Spirit seminar; it was the **Sealed** in the Spirit seminar. When Father Paul blessed each participant in that seminar on the night of the Baptism in the Spirit, he said, "Be **sealed** with the Spirit." I think that was appropriate because that set the cornerstone for this prayer community. So we need to praise God for that! We are in existence because of Him; we are starting our 30th year because of Him. We thank You for that, Lord!

PRAYER

I think that we should start off with a prayer for Father Paul, and for the staff in the church office, as well as for whoever is going to be selected as our new pastor after Father Paul's retirement. This is going to be a big transition for Father Paul, as well as for the staff, and also a big transition for all of the parishioners. I know that Father Paul wants the transition to go smoothly for everyone; he wants this parish to continue on as it always has done. He wants this parish to continue to be the 'Family of Holy Apostles'. The Lord is going to use Father Paul and He is going to use him in a big way. "Lord, we ask You to hold and bless Father Paul. Open the door to the new adventure that You have planned for him, Lord, and let him see that You are guiding and leading him in that journey. We pray for the staff as well, Lord, that You would grant them a smooth transition from this leadership to the leadership of the new pastor. Send Your Holy Spirit upon this situation and touch each and every one of them and let them know that You are going to be by their side and our side as well. We thank You, Lord, for what You are going to do in Father Paul's life and what you are going to do with all of this community. Amen!"

SCRIPTURE

Psalms 34: 2 – 4: I will extol the Lord at all times; His praise will always be on my lips. My soul will glorify in the Lord that the poor may hear and be glad. Magnify the Lord with me; let us exalt His Name together.

SCRIPTURE

Romans 8: 35, 37 – 39: Who, then, can separate us from the love of Christ? Can trouble do it, or hardship or persecution or hunger or poverty or danger of death? No, in all these things we have complete victory through Him Who loved us! For I am certain that nothing can separate us from His love; neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the future, neither the world nor the world below – there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord.

PRAYER

O Lord, we thank You!! Glory to You! We thank You, Lord, that right now as we stand in this place of worship, we know that we are totally loved and surrounded by Your love, and nothing, **nothing** can ever separate us from Your love! Mighty God, we thank You!!

PRAYER

Lord, as we sang that song, I was reminded that You are our Peace! The world may be going through all of the things that are happening, but we have You and we can stand and lean on You; we can stand on holy ground and You are Jehovah-shalom, God of Peace.

EXHORTATION

You know that that was a very joyful song because there were so many truths proclaimed in that song: “You are the joy of my life...”, “You are making it better and better...”, “You are my hope in the night...”. There are so many truths in that song and that is why we sing it with great joy.

SCRIPTURE / EXHORTATION / PRAYER

Mark 8: 34 – 36, 38: Then Jesus said to the crowd and His disciples, “If anyone wants to be a follower of Mine, let him deny himself and take up his cross everyday and follow Me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it; and anyone who loses his life for Me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? If anyone is ashamed of Me and My word, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His Father’s glory with the holy angels.” So we need to get it right and learn it now! But we know our choice! We are not ashamed of the gospel or of our Lord Jesus! We believe that He died, rose and will come again- He will come again at the end of time. He sends His Holy Spirit to us, to fill us with joy, life, power, and holiness and He draws us closer to the Father. Lord, help us live that Trinitarian life of the Father Who loves His Son so much that He sent His Son into this world that we would become one.

SCRIPTURE

Psalms 103: 1 – 5: Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my being, praise His holy Name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits – Who forgives all your sins and heals all

your diseases, Who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, Who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. Then is **verses 8 – 13**: The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will He harbor His anger forever; He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His love for those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on those who fear him, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him.

SHARING

Let's take time now to say our good-byes and express our appreciation to Richard who will be moving to Arizona. I know that he wants to say a few words to this community as well. Sometimes people come into our lives who are fulfillments of the scripture, (as in **Matthew below**), and Richard is one of those people. He came to our community years ago and he had a lot of hopes, desires, dreams and energy. Richard has been a light to this community. In being a light to this community, he gives glory to the Father in heaven. So the Lord is taking Richard on another journey to Arizona. As we have memories of Richard here, we hope that he will take some of our memories to those people in Arizona. You know that we leave a legacy in all the places we have been in our lives and then have left – a legacy is just a part of who we are; of how people will remember us. We will remember Richard for the time that he has put into this community – his energy, talents and support, for his unwavering desire to praise Jesus Christ. That is his gift to us! This community is a better place today because of Richard's involvement with us.

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 5: 14 – 16: You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, **let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.**

RICHARD'S FAREWELL

Earlier today I had asked the Lord to give me a scripture for all of you. The Lord gave me this: In **Colossians 3: 11**: "Christ is all, and is in all!" Christ is in all of you; just as all of you are in me. I am honored and humbled to have known you, to have served with you, to have cried with you, to have gotten mad at you. I know that I am not the easiest person to deal with sometimes. But over all, it has been a joy to know all of you; to worship with you, to praise with you, to pray with you. It has been a lot of fun! But stand up and be counted! Worship God in everything that you do! Make your life a worship to God, in your thoughts, your words and your deeds. Allow God to continue to pour His love into you each and every day. I truly love you all and I want to thank you for everything! I will come back to visit as my sister lives here. I thank you for your great love which you have shown me throughout the past twenty years. I can't tell you how much I appreciate the love and support which you have shown me over the years. You are all welcome to come to Arizona and visit me. Thank you and God bless you!!

